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26 March 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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Warsaw Pact - USSR: [Representatives of the Warsaw Pact may have met in East Berlin last month.]

[redacted] in December 1965 the USSR proposed a meeting at the ministerial level to consider improvement in the pact's organizational structure. At that time the Romanians were fearful of increased Soviet control and countered with a proposal that the meeting be downgraded to the deputy-minister level.]

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[redacted]
There are no reports on a February pact meeting which would indicate what agreements, if any, were reached. Moreover, in view of current developments within NATO, some pact members may want to adopt a wait-and-see attitude on pending issues in the Eastern alliance.]

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Czechoslovakia: [Fierce debates within the Czechoslovak party leadership reportedly have erupted over the question of how to handle issues involved in a partial rehabilitation of Stalin.]

[With their 13th Party Congress scheduled to open on 31 May, the Czechs have been able to decide only that emphasis must be placed on Stalin's accomplishments during World War II and in postwar Soviet industrialization. Apparently they intend to await the results of the Soviet party congress next week before making any further decisions.]

[Similar debates are probably under way in most other Eastern European parties because of the potentially explosive implications which Stalin's rehabilitation would have for these regimes.]

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*Ecuador: [The government appears to be employing dictatorial measures in the face of renewed challenges to its authority.]

[A commercial strike provoked by export-import interests protesting hikes to import duties has partially closed the Guayaquil business community and has spread to some other cities. Student groups are supporting the merchants, but the armed forces high command has reaffirmed its backing of the military junta.]

[The government is determined to control this latest challenge to its power, and to its program of emergency economic measures. These measures are designed to combat a trade imbalance which threatens to cost the nation almost its entire exchange reserves this year.]

[The army occupied the Central University in Quito last night, and also attempted to arrest plotting former president Ponce, as the junta began to exercise its mandate from the armed forces to maintain public order. Student resistance to troops at the university reportedly resulted in two deaths and numerous injuries. These losses will certainly provoke widespread student demonstrations and press opposition to the government throughout the country.]

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Malta: [Prime Minister Borg Olivier's pro-Western National Party is given a slight edge over Dom Mintoff's Malta Labor Party in the general elections of 26-28 March. A victory for Borg Olivier would assure continuation of the NATO headquarters there on present terms, whereas Mintoff has indicated that he would strike a harder bargain. Borg Olivier may fall short of a parliamentary majority and be forced into forming a minority or coalition government. This probably would further complicate his hitherto indecisive attempts to solve Malta's serious economic problems.]

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